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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT INVESTING IN BETTER HEALTH CARE FOR LONDON AREA RESIDENTS

London Health Sciences Centre And St. Joseph's Health Care Will Strengthen Services

LONDON – The McGuinty government is continuing to invest in better health care for London and area residents with $80.8 million in funding for two London hospitals, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Our government is ensuring Ontario's hospitals have the resources they need to strengthen critical programs and services," Smitherman said. "This investment provides additional support to the hospitals to ensure they can continue to provide London-area residents with access to quality health care services."

The government is providing:

- A base funding increase of $27.5 million and $36.7 million in one-time funding to the London Health Sciences Centre. This brings the hospital's total base allocation for 2006/07 to $596.3 million, an 11 per cent increase in base funding over 2005/06.

- A base funding increase of $12.5 million and $4.1 million in one-time funding to St. Joseph's Health Care. This brings the hospital's total base allocation for 2006/07 to $291.5 million, a 7.9 per cent increase in base funding over 2005/06.

Prior to receiving this funding, both hospitals underwent peer reviews to help them achieve a balanced budget. Through this process, CEOs of hospitals that are of similar size and type reviewed the hospital's operations and provided them with specific recommendations on how to improve their efficiency and find a workable plan to balance their budgets.

Funding for both hospitals is conditional on each hospital signing their accountability agreement that commits them to balance their budgets.

"Both hospitals are working hard to ensure we are operating in the most efficient and effective way," said Cliff Nordal, President and CEO of London Health Sciences Centre and President and CEO, St. Joseph's Health Care, London. "We thank the Minister and the government for resolving the longstanding funding challenges faced by London's hospitals. This funding will allow us to sustain quality care in this region."

"Today's announcement allows London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care to get on with doing the day-to-day job of providing essential and vital health services to Ontarians," said Khalil Ramal, MPP for London-Fanshawe.

"I am proud of our government's record of success as we continue to move forward with our health care partners," said Chris Bentley, MPP for London-West. "This investment signals that the McGuinty government is putting patients first

In addition to the 2006/07 base funding, London Health Sciences Centre has also received:

- A total of $14.7 million in one-time funding as part of the Wait Times Strategy to perform 722 additional cardiac procedures, 3,120 more MRI exams, 1,018 more CT exams, 440 additional cancer surgeries, and 450 more hip and knee total joint replacements

- A commitment of $489,359 in capital funding in 2006/07 to make needed upgrades to keep their facilities in top condition for patients.

In addition to the 2006/07 base funding, St. Joseph's Health Care has also received:

- A total of $2.1 million in one-time funding as part of the Wait Times Strategy to perform 1,753 additional CT exams, 1,323 more MRI exams, 1,450 additional cataract surgeries, 55 more cancer surgeries and 21 more hip and knee total joint replacements

- A commitment of $323,186 in capital funding in 2006/07 to make needed upgrades to keep their facilities in top condition for patients.

"I'm delighted that our government and our local health care partners are ensuring that London-area patients will be able to continue to get the high quality health care they deserve," said Deb Matthews, MPP for London North Centre.

"The government has recognized our hospitals' unique challenges and, with this funding increase, we continue working together to best meet the health care needs of our community," said Steve Peters, MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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Media Contacts:

David Spencer
Minister's Office
416-327-4320

A.G. Klei
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 1-866-532-3161

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